



# Teachers' Guide

## Medieval Community<sup>®</sup>

### Medieval Community<sup>®</sup>

MAN IN HIS WORLD



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**COMMUNITY**

Community focuses on three of the most important structures of the medieval world — the castle, and the Church. One would expect the underlying subject matter of these three to be in turn economic, political and spiritual. One of the main conclusions of students will be that it is very difficult to classify these three according to one or two clearly-defined categories. The manor was not just an economic unit, but a social unit of the medieval world, a unit under legal control, and a clearly defined unit of the Church. The castle was not only a political unit, but an economic centre, a cultural, and educational unit. The Church limited its concern to matters of the soul as an economic, political, social, and spiritual unit (as with the crusades) even a military unit. The doctrines of the Church were felt by all members of the society in their

**TION (pages 3-5)**

Provide evidence to set the medieval world in context both in space and time. The evidence is generalized and incomplete and the teacher should be encouraged to keep these pages in mind, going back to them as they learn more

about the medieval world.

**MAP OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE (page 3)**

Work through the questions on the Roman Empire. One way to understand the size and importance of the empire is to have the students consult an atlas and list all the modern countries or parts of countries that are now found in the area that used to be covered by the empire. How many can they find? Is it easy to travel back and forth between them? How many languages do the people speak? Are any of these countries enemies?

**TIME CHART (pages 4-5)**

An introduction to the chart might be to ask the students what they think the word "medieval" means, and whether they think the chart can help them explain it. Ask the students what they would call the two ends of the chart (*modern*, and *ancient*). From what they already know of the medieval world, which pictures refer to that age? Where are these in the chart? "Medieval," therefore, means "middle," and is the period in the middle between the ancient world and the modern.

About how long did the "middle" ages last? About what dates did they cover? Can you be sure from the chart? How accurate is it possible to be with a chart like this one? What basic ideas is it trying to show? What other things would you want to know? How would you find out?

Project: Have the class make as many guesses as possible about what the middle ages were probably like, using only the evidence on the map and the time chart. The chart suggests three categories — have the students think up other categories and organize their guesses under these headings. As they work with the book have the students look for evidence to confirm, deny, or modify each guess.

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## THE MANOR (pages 6-26)

Our study of the medieval world begins with the manor, the basic community of those days. The study begins with a modern farm in order to familiarize students with the essential features of farming, and to provide a standard of comparison for the study of the manor. The conditions on the Scott farm can be compared to Sir John's farm, and the differences will raise a variety of questions which will provide the class with a deeper awareness of medieval life.

## FRANK SCOTT'S FARM — A MODERN FARM (pages 6-7)

The questions on pages 6-7 relate to three concepts that are fundamental to the study of this section: technology, productivity, and lifestyle. Three cue questions can be used to bring these key issues into focus for investigation.

1. How modern, or up-to-date is the Scott farm? (level of technology)
2. As a way of making a living, how productive is the Scott farm? (level of productivity)
3. How would life on the Scott farm appeal to you? (level of lifestyle)

The Scott farm can be more effectively probed if the students are prepared with detailed information about the evidence shown. The crops at the top of the picture should be identified as 1) tobacco 2) red clover 3) wheat 4) corn and it would be helpful to have the class do research in the library or visit a local farm to learn more about these plants. These research projects could include such questions as:

- What does the plant really look like? (large sketches, or better still, the real plant)
- What are the characteristics of the plant? (hardiness? growing period? etc.)
- How do farmers farm the plant? (planting? cultivating? harvesting? storage?)
- What is it used for? (human consumption? animal fodder?)

With this kind of knowledge, students can form perceptive hypotheses. For instance, if they have learned that clover makes an excellent green forage, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the two cow pastures are growing this plant. If they have learned how wheat is harvested they will identify the equipment at work in two fields and can hypothesize that they are planted in wheat.

Students will probably notice that only two of the crops grown are used as food for humans and their research will indicate that corn can also be used for animal fodder. From this it is reasonable to assume that the Scotts do not eat what they grow, and do not rely directly on the farm for much of their food.

This is but one possible sequence of inferences that can be derived from a study of the evidence. Students may develop many different sets of hypotheses such as these

- The Scott farm is almost entirely mechanized.
- The Scott farm uses scientific methods.
- As a four-man operation the Scott farm is very efficiently run.
- A great deal of what the Scott farm produces is sold.

- The Scott farm is both diversified and specialized in its produce.
- The general appearance of the farm indicates a prosperous operation.
- The Scotts have time to relax and enjoy themselves.
- The Scotts probably have as many luxuries as city folk.
- Farm children need not work on the farm; they can go to school.
- Farm life offers privacy but not loneliness.

The children will doubtless state many of their hypotheses as general conclusions applicable to all farms (such as the last two above). Other generalizations might be:

- Farmers specialize in one or two crops.
- The successful farm must be scientifically operated.
- Living on a farm would be fun.
- Very few people live in the country.

These generalizations need to be put to the test.

## SIR JOHN'S FARM — A MEDIEVAL MANOR (pages 8-9)

The medieval manor offers the students an excellent opportunity to test their conclusions, using the same concepts they used in studying the Scott farm, ie. technology, productivity, life-style. For instance, if the students apply the concept of technology to Sir John's farm they are not likely to find their conclusions valid. The farm is not mechanized; most of the tools are hand tools. Whereas it took only four men to work the entire Scott farm, here it takes four men to operate one plow. The chief power sources are water, oxen, and human labor. Transportation is by horse, foot, or ox cart. Scientific cattle breeding techniques are non-existent, as can be seen from the mixing of cattle and the lack of fencing. The pasture is certainly no clover meadow. The cattle are scrawny and ill-fed. Due to the lack of machinery it apparently takes some 30 laborers to produce what would appear to be a very inferior crop.

From technology the investigation logically leads to productivity. The crops are difficult to recognize. As plants they are very poor specimens. The first appears to be a wheat spike, the second could be any long grass that could be used as hay, the third is probably oats, and the fourth is nothing more than a weed. Probably, the medieval manor grew more of the latter than any other plant. When we consider the stunted nature of both plants and animals, when we observe that some 30 laborers (and their families) had to be provided for, we can entertain the hypothesis that there would be very little produce left over for sale. Or put another way: *the level of productivity is subsistence*. All of this may eventually lead some bright student to make a generalization such as the following (in his or her own words, of course): *The level of technology determines the level of productivity*.

The factual knowledge that has emerged from the study of these two farms is important, and the general conclusions are more important still, but most important is that students begin to recognize that their conclusions are only as good as the evidence they are based on. In this case the conclusions derived from one piece of sketchy pictorial evidence were in-

validated by a second picture.

As the investigation proceeds new concepts will emerge; questions 5-7 pages 8-9 stress two such concepts, communication and mobility. Both can be identified in the technology of the farm, which in turn allows for inferences as to the farm's level of productivity, and this in turn conditions the level of lifestyle.

Questions 8-10 open up a third concept, class structure. There seems to be a clear division on the manor between those who farm and those who don't. Does this suggest inefficiency, or does it suggest an efficiency that has the capability to support a fair number of non-farmers? Conflicting hypotheses are possible within the one piece of evidence. Students should recognize that reaching a conclusion is not all that simple and that additional data may be needed. Question 8 approaches the concept of class structure through the study of clothing. Mr. Scott's clothes are no problem since overalls meet our expectations of what farmers are supposed to wear. But Sir John is dressed in armor and his wife in finery. Students may hypothesize that farmer John doesn't farm but spends his time on military matters. It may also lead to hypotheses concerning the stability of medieval times. Again, we need more evidence to consolidate such statements.

### **THE SERF AND THE MANOR (pages 10-13)**

Pages 10-13 provide extra material to elaborate and extend the investigation of the manor, with particular reference to the concepts that have been developed so far. Work through the material page by page to familiarize the children with the details of the content.

A good way to handle the evidence in greater depth and get at underlying concepts is to divide the class into groups and to assign each group an area of investigation such as the following:

**Assignment 1** How efficient (productive) is the medieval system of allocating land to individual farmers?

**Assignment 2** How does class structure affect the productivity of the manor?

**Assignment 3** How fair is the distribution of the work load on the medieval farm? What effects would this have on productivity?

### **THE MEDIEVAL PLOW (pages 14-17)**

Pages 14-17 relate to the most sophisticated piece of technology available to the medieval farmer, and the plow probably determined many aspects of the medieval system of farming. When a plow turns a furrow it performs three sequential operations. First, the coulter or knife cuts the sod vertically; next, the share cuts beneath the sod horizontally; and finally, the mould board turns the soil over to one side. The standard number of oxen required to pull the plow was eight, but where soils were light, farmers could often succeed with as few as four. Further evidence of the weight of the plow is suggested by the addition of wheels. The cost of a plow can be judged from the complex nature of its construction, and the need to build a sturdy piece of equipment. The cost factor should also be reckoned in terms of the specialized labor that was required to build it. Skilled carpentry

was involved, and also the skill of a blacksmith to forge the coulter and the share. An additional cost is the eight oxen, harnesses and equipment. All of these things may appear relatively inexpensive in today's economy, but it is apparent from the number of men involved in the ownership of the plow and oxen that the cost was much greater than any farmer of those days could afford. In the case of our hypothetical ox-gang, ownership is split among seven farmers.

The term *ox-gang* describes the team of men who pooled their resources in order to put together a plow team, and they would work together in the fields. Quite commonly, their strips of arable land were adjacent to one another. Even so, they worked each strip separately, and each member of the ox-gang prized his holdings of land as his own. Thus, although each farmer owned his own strips of land, the cost of operation forced him to farm communally.

### **THE OX-GANG PLOWS THE FIELD (pages 16-17)**

The balk was usually a high furrow or a grassy strip but in some cases a ditch was used as a border marker. Such was the importance of maintaining one's borders that the farmer was required at all times to turn the furrow away from the border markings. This custom was adhered to over centuries and in time created what is called the ridge-and-furrow effect, caused by the constant turning of the soil away from the borders and building it up toward the centre. Since the standard plow turned a furrow to the right, it meant that the farmer always plowed the strip clockwise. There is evidence of this custom on page 21 of the text. To the modern farmer this custom is inefficient, since one is plowing into the previously turned furrow. To the modern farmer it would be logical to start plowing down the centre of the strip and work out toward the edges. The S-shape effect noted in question 4 is evidence of the clockwise movement and is caused by the natural tendency to begin a swing-out to help negotiate the turn at either end.

It is possible to work through the questions in the text and achieve much of what has been talked about. But the learning pattern that has been developing up to this point has been controlled through the use of selected concepts. Pages 14-17 offer evidence of the most advanced technology on the medieval farm and any hypotheses that have been developed about the technology, the efficiency, or the productivity of the manor now can be tested in relation to the medieval plow. A sequence of lessons might cue in on premises such as the following:

- The medieval plow was the most expensive and sophisticated piece of farm equipment (technology) of its times.
- The medieval plow determined the field patterns and the farming methods typical of medieval farms.
- The field patterns and farming methods of the medieval manor resulted in an inefficient and generally unproductive operation.

### **A WORD ABOUT NAMES**

The names of medieval people have already appeared

at various places in the book and students may have already commented on their peculiarities. The examples given on page 14 indicate that people were known by their first names. There was no last name. To avoid confusion, a man's name was followed by his occupation or his place of birth or origin. All the farmers are known by their occupation, with the exception of Geoffrey of Devon who is known by his place of origin. Some of the occupations are easy to recognize, whereas others, such as thatching and poaching are not familiar to moderns.

### **THE SOUTH FIELD (pages 18-19)**

A good way to analyze the south field is to trace the field shown on page 18 and color each area differently. Then trace the field strips on page 19 on to a piece of acetate and lay it over the first. The students should be able to relate topography to soil conditions and apply these to the field pattern. Thin soils would be expected at the top of the hill since the tendency is for rainfall to erode soil from the higher spots. Logically, the best soils should be in the lowest spots. The problem with bottom lands is they can be very wet and heavy to plow. Sandy soils tend not to hold moisture and dry out quickly. The best choice is somewhere in between the thin hill soil and the wet bottom lands.

Question 1 on page 19 was asked previously. Whatever the response at that time there is now evidence to test it. This evidence suggests that each man is entitled to a share of both the good and the bad soils. The average serf would hold about 30 acres of land, a figure which has been mentioned on page 13. The children might find it instructive to compare this area with the two small gardens on the Scott farm in that both are devoted to the production of food for direct consumption.

Since a strip is as long as a team of oxen can travel without stopping to rest, it is reasonable to say that soils that are hard to plow will have the shorter strips. The headlands provide a means of access to individual strips, and an area in which to turn the heavy plow. After the strips were planted, the headlands would also be seeded.

The arrangement of names on the field indicates the ox-gang has strips that are adjacent. One can infer from this that the gang would plow each of these strips one after the other before proceeding to the next strip of, say, Wat the Tyler.

### **THE WEST FIELD (page 20)**

Barley is a cereal crop. It can be used for making bread, but was more commonly used to make beer. Question 2 is an obvious reference to the ox-gang and should present little difficulty until we run out of ox-gang names. The alternatives are to add two strips for the lord of the manor or one for the lord and one for any other farm hand that we know.

Students may recall from their plant projects that different plants use up different nutrients from the soil. To persist in planting the same crop in the same field year after year would be bad land-use. In answer to question 4 the problem rests in the team and communal operation of the farm. Any progressive-thinking farmer would be opposed by the rest of the community. To upset established customs would

be unthinkable to most, and change was virtually impossible.

Fallow means leaving the land idle, or cropless. This is supposed to rest the soil. Actually, lying fallow has little positive effects on the soil's fertility. The manure from the grazing cattle probably had a far more beneficial effect.

### **THE MANOR COURT (page 21)**

After working through the material on this page and discussing the different matters that come before the manor court, the children might find it interesting to compare the manor court with modern times. Suppose Joe Grant and his wife committed the same kinds of offenses, how would they be punished? Who would hand out the punishment? Would all these things be *legal* offenses in the modern world?

The children might also consider what would happen if Sir John did something wrong. What if he tried to cheat one of the farmers? What if he made an unfair judgement? Who would punish him if he hurt or cheated somebody who didn't live on the manor?

### **THE MANOR HOUSE (page 22)**

The fact that the farm house was in reality a small castle tells us something of the instability of the times. Page 9 shows the outer defensive features of walls, drawbridge, and moat. Page 22 emphasizes the defensive features of the house itself. The tower can be used as a lookout or as a defensive stronghold. The parapet allows defenders on the wall a place of concealment from which they could shoot arrows. The lower windows are narrow to prevent entrance by invaders. Obviously, the threat was not as great on the second floor. The second-floor windows are spacious and designed to let in light and warmth, as the word "solarium" suggests. Being on the second floor would be much warmer under foot.

### **THE SERF'S HOUSE (page 23)**

The extreme difference in housing is evidence of the social structure of medieval society, and the extreme differences of material wealth and social status. The children can get a very graphic idea of the difference in houses by estimating the size of Wat the Tyler's house and measuring it off on the classroom floor or the playground. Using the scale on page 22, measure off the size of the manor house (or as much of it as would fit in the classroom).

The size of the peasant's house becomes even more significant if the children realize that the family it contained would probably be an extended family including grandparents, uncles, aunts and other relatives, as well as the nuclear unit of mother, father and children. Have the children estimate how many people might have to fit in the hut. How much room could each person have? What would it be like to spend a rainy winter day there?

There is no conclusive answer to the question of fairness. Most students will react that the situation is very unfair. But we must keep in mind the conditions of medieval life. Someone had to provide leadership and protection, and to perform these tasks the leader would need a house that offered both prestige and security. However, others may wish to argue that the peasants were so badly off that the price for protection was far too high.

## A MEDIEVAL CALENDAR (pages 24-25)

The artwork on these pages comes from a medieval calendar. As evidence it is primary. In addition, it is the sort of evidence that allows testing of many of the hypotheses that have been advanced during the course of this chapter. Concepts of technology, productivity, lifestyle, class structure, etc. can all be seen reflected in the calendar.

If calendars reflect their times, can one take a modern calendar as an accurate reflection of our times? When the children have identified the various medieval activities could they make up a modern calendar showing comparable scenes from modern life? What scenes would they choose that would give as much information about modern times as the medieval calendar does about those times?

## THE SERF'S SAD TALE (page 26)

Before turning to this page, ask the children who they think would be likely to attack Sir John's fortified house. List the answers on the board: some probable responses are, robber barons, the Norsemen, outlaws, foreign invaders, the Sheriff of Nottingham, rebels, etc.

If the students do not suggest a revolt by the serfs of the manor ask them to turn to page 26 and see if it tells about another possible danger to Sir John. If the students suggest the possibility of a peasant revolt ask them to explain what demands the peasants might make? What changes might they ask for? How could these improve the lot of the serfs? Have the students compare their suggestions with page 26.

## THE CASTLE (pages 27-45)

The second section of *Medieval Community* focusses on the castle, and the military, political, social and cultural life that grew up in and around that institution. Environmental factors provide the key to understanding people's behavior, and in this instance the dominant influence is the human environment. As has been suggested in the study of Sir John's fortified manor house, the middle ages were times of danger and political instability. Any study of medieval life should reveal that fear for one's person was a common state of mind; this is a major concept and should be stressed. It will be further developed in the section on the Church and religion.

This political instability and psychological climate of personal insecurity produced the system known as *feudalism*, and the development of the castle, feudalism's most striking and enduring symbol.

A possible introduction to the castle might be to follow on from The Serf's Sad Tale. Discuss with the children what Sir John could do if he was attacked by some of the enemies suggested earlier. Would he be able to hold out against them? Would he wait to be attacked by a foreign intruder? Would he join forces with the other nobles and the king?

A Definition: Feudalism was a system of landholding based on the obligation to provide military service in return for the right to hold land.

This idea is foreshadowed on page 12. It is not necessary to discuss the concept of feudalism formally or at length. It does, however, provide a convenient

introduction to the study of the castle, and the theme of personal insecurity. It also extends the concept of the hierachial class structure of society, and foreshadows the diagram on page 46. After the students have discussed the relationship of Sir John to Sir Godfrey, they might be asked who they think gave Sir Godfrey his land. The children may be referred briefly to page 46. Ask them if they can place Sir John and Sir Godfrey on the diagram. Who is above Sir John? Who are the people below Sir John? What might this tell them about who owns the land?

## A MEDIEVAL CASTLE (page 27)

There are many obvious answers to the questions on this page, and many that are purely speculative. To verify speculative answers provide books that treat parts of the castle in detail or suggest research topics and have groups or individuals carry out research in the library. Example: the moat is a protective device, but how protective? Have a group study moats and get dimensions. What about reliability of water supply for a moat, and the ability to raise or lower the water quickly? Could it be used for fish as a supplementary food supply in times of siege?

Usually the lord and his family lived in the keep, enjoying the extra protection and comfort, while the soldiers and servants lived with the animals in the wooden buildings inside the castle wall.

The materials used to build the castle are stone, metal, wood and earth, since virtually all castles were constructed on high ground, whether naturally occurring or artificially built up. Water may also be suggested as a building material. Seek a discussion on the merits of wood and stone, since many castles were wooden. Extend the question to who would build a wooden castle, and why. Why are there few wooden castles around now?

## LIFE IN A MEDIEVAL CASTLE (pages 28-29)

As with the previous page there are many answers both obvious and speculative, and where possible the answers should be checked using reference books. The main benefit of this discussion, however, will be to give the children a greater feel for what life was probably like in the Middle Ages. Compare the dormitory to a bedroom. The Great Hall was used to entertain. Captured knights were worth a great deal in ransom so a guard room was very important. Relate the chapel to the idea of fear — the presence of enemies might rule out "going to church." The storeroom needed to be huge in case the castle came under siege for a long time, and the well was vital.

The well, the storeroom, the battlements, the stone walls, the narrow windows would all relate to defence. The large dormitories also relate to defence, since there would have to be space for a garrison to sleep if the keep came under direct siege.

In discussing comforts that are missing, things like refrigeration, central heating, running water, glass windows, etc. will come out. The castle is the home of a rich and powerful noble, but do the children think he has a better or more enjoyable life than they? Compare the life of the noble to the life of Wat the Tyler.

Concerning modernization of the castle, it matters

little which answers are given, but be prepared for such answers as telephone and electricity and grasp the opportunity to compare modern communications and services to those of medieval times.

### **A SQUIRE BECOMES A KNIGHT (pages 30-31)**

The aim here is to teach the students that the site chosen for a castle was extremely important. The technique of decreasing the scale from map to map allows the students to revise their decisions as more evidence is provided. There are no "correct" answers to the questions, and the children should be encouraged to suggest as many considerations as they can. The following are some ideas only:

Map A: The location suggested will probably be the island, with its natural moat, and the material will probably be wood, since the island is forested.

Map B: The building material chosen will certainly be stone, but no one location stands out — it might be built by the quarry, on the island, at the river mouth, or anywhere along the shore.

Map C: The mouth of the river is the most likely choice since that spot controls all routes of communication. The high land not only protects the castle, but forces traffic to travel close along the coast line and/or up the river valley.

### **BUILDING A CASTLE (pages 32-33)**

The weakest part of castles was the entrance. Elaborate design went into drawbridge and portcullis construction. Often, several portcullises were built in a series. The advantage of a portcullis was that it could be dropped quickly in the event of surprise attack, while a drawbridge was slower to operate but provided greater security during a long siege.

Any other opening in the wall of a castle was also a weak spot and windows were either made small, or provided with coverings.

The top battlement is a later development than the lower one and allowed the defenders a better vantage point. They provided a more sophisticated battlement but were much more difficult to build. Overhanging battlements had holes, called *machicolations*, that allowed defenders to drop things straight down on attackers at the base of the wall. What items might the defenders choose?

### **COMPARE PLAN A AND PLAN B (pages 34-35)**

Plan A is Sir Godfrey's castle from page 27. Plan B is Caernarvon shown on page 35. The castle with the square towers is older. Have the students identify all the parts in the picture and the plan and compare the size of the castles. Square towers were easier to build, for obvious reasons, but the rectangular corners could easily be knocked loose by missiles. This danger was reduced over the years by building hexagonal and octagonal towers, but the final development of castle architecture was the round tower, which not only had no corners, but deflected missiles better than a flat surface.

The entrances deserve a lot of study. Each castle has a series of portcullises but the castle from page 27 has a tower arrangement allowing the defenders to trap attackers between the portcullises — an excellent

defensive measure. It is difficult to say which would be harder to break through, but in all probability A would be the more difficult since there is a second barrier after the portcullises.

The opportunity to work with a topographic map is usually denied young students. Allow them to spend time talking and studying the map. Let them identify streams, hills, cliffs and valleys before trying the questions.

### **ATTACK! (pages 36-37)**

Page 36 shows the three basic ways of assaulting a castle — go over the wall, go through the wall, go under the wall. For the purposes of the illustration all three are shown simultaneously, but in reality few medieval armies would have disposed of the resources needed to mount three different kinds of attack, and would probably not have divided their forces during the actual assault.

Because castles were bastions of defence, many offensive techniques were devised to attack them. The trebuchet, the mangonel, and the ballista (D) were popular offensive weapons. They were unwieldy and difficult to move but could be constructed during a siege, and could hurl huge boulders, hot coals and so on. Mining was carried out in the hope of collapsing a tower. As the mine was dug, it was timbered to support it. Later a fire would destroy the timbers and the tower might collapse. It was more difficult to collapse a round tower than a square one, and this was another factor in the progression from square to hexagonal to octagonal to circular.

### **THE SIEGE (pages 38-39)**

Because castles were so strong, and offensive weapons relatively weak during the medieval period, castles were usually captured by siege rather than assault. These pages will give the children an idea of the realities of warfare under siege conditions.

Page 38 may also be used as an introduction to the whole section on the castle and might be read to the students before they begin page 27.

Read the account of the siege of Chateau-Gaillard to the students and allow time for discussion or other reaction. In studying the castle itself, read this second extract to them: "Southwards, towards Paris, there was a stockade right across the deep and swirling river. Everyone marvelled that Richard's engineers could do this, but the greatest marvel was the Saucy Castle itself on top of the Rock. King Richard himself directed its building, living the while in the palace on the island. Look at the plan of the Chateau-Gaillard. Notice the shape. Everywhere there are curves and rounded towers. Do you remember the weakness of straight, rectangular castles — that it was difficult for the defender to hit the enemy when he got right under the walls? Any part of the walls which could not be kept under fire by the garrison was called a 'dead' place. In the Chateau-Gaillard there were no dead pieces of wall. South-eastwards, towards Paris, the ridge sloped gradually down, so this was the weakest point. You will see at once that this was also the direction from which the French enemy was expected, so here Richard built the thickest and strongest fortifications, in an outer ward (or bailey)

shaped like a triangle." (from *Medieval Castles* (Then And There Series) by M. Reeves, published by Longman)

### **THE MEDIEVAL KNIGHT (pages 40-45)**

Before turning to these pages ask the children what words come to mind when they think of a medieval knight. The automatic responses will probably be things like: brave, noble, daring, gentleman, armor, dragons, chivalrous, etc., etc. Have the children speculate what this meant in daily life: What did a knight actually do? How did he spend his time? How did he become a knight? What kind of training did he have?

Pages 40-45 may be approached as one unit, or split up into several topics that might involve extensive research projects on subjects that catch the children's imagination.

### **BECOMING A KNIGHT (pages 40-41)**

Have the children identify the various activities involved in training to become a knight. Are they appropriate to what a knight had to do? What other things might he have to know? How does his education compare with the children's? What is missing from the knight's education? What part did games play in his training? What part do sports play in education today? Are they more, or less, important?

### **A KNIGHT WAS MEANT TO FIGHT (pages 42-43)**

Armor changed and evolved throughout the medieval period from Sir Robert to Sir Edward to Sir James to Sir Hubert. The sword became shorter and the shield smaller. Sir Robert's metal rings sewn onto a leather undercoat evolved into the coats of mail worn by Sir Edward and Sir James. Helmets became heavier and covered the whole head; plate armor was added to more and more areas of the body. Sir Hubert has a complete suit of armor, no shield, and a heavy mace to dent armor plate. Throughout the period, armor was very heavy and required a draft horse to carry the knight, though contrary to later misconception, knights did not have to be hoisted into the saddle by clumsy windlasses, but could mount their horses easily and unaided. Knights spent little time actually fighting; they enjoyed a circuit of jousting and hunting in the good weather not unlike rodeo performers today.

### **ROMANCE, CHIVALRY AND LEGEND (pages 44-45)**

This is a good opportunity to delve into the literary treasures associated with the Middle Ages. Be careful when having the students create a legend. They will need a lot of experience with the form and a lot of help. Having them write lengthy stories only serves to cripple their interests — let them use tape recorders for the sake of time. Simplified versions of medieval legends may be found in books like the following:

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Retold by Constance Hieatt, Thomas Crowell Co., N.Y.

*The Castle of Ladies*, Retold by Constance Hieatt, Thomas Crowell, N.Y.

*The Joy of the Court*, Retold by Constance Hieatt, Thomas Crowell, N.Y.

Use able readers to read stories and poems daily. Recordings of medieval music are available, and can add an extra element of fun to the creation of a legend as suggested on page 45.

### **THE CHURCH (pages 46-64)**

This third section of *Medieval Community* expands the focus of study to the medieval world as a whole, and to the one universal institution of that period, the Church. The influence of the Church in the Middle Ages is difficult for the modern mind to comprehend. There was for all intents and purposes only one religion and one church, and everyone believed. In an age of poor communications, weak political structures and mass illiteracy, the activities of the Church dominated social and cultural life and extended into areas that we would call political.

The children might be interested to know that in a time when all men were strongly religious, success in government often resulted in appointment to Church honors, and vice-versa. Thomas à Becket is a good example of this, and the dramatic story of his death and martyrdom might make an interesting introduction to this section.

### **A PYRAMID OF PEOPLE (pages 46-47)**

The pyramid on page 46 is an attempt to present specific features of the medieval world by means of a simple, visual model. It does not attempt to be complete, and many alternate models are possible. It does, however, indicate that:

- medieval society was a highly structured hierarchy
- movement from one level to another was unlikely
- there were two parallel power structures — political and religious
- power rested with a few, sometimes with a great deal of overlapping
- there was some slight chance of upward social mobility in the Church
- religious ideas were an integral part of the medieval power structure
- the physical world merged with the supernatural in people's imaginations — the diagram contains the elements of God and the Devil, which men envisioned literally as Heaven Above and Hell Beneath; moreover, the ways of the Devil were devious and ever-present — only the very vigilant peasant or king could evade them.

In the whole class or small groups, discuss the questions at the top of page 47, writing down the general consensus of the group. Where disagreement is encountered, write the reasons for each answer. See pages 8-9 or 13 for help with the first question. Although power was in the hands of a few, even these men looked to more powerful leaders above them. Authoritarian organizations result in a pyramid structure.

Some peasants became local clergy, or in exceptional circumstances, knights — but this violated the pre-ordained structure and was highly unusual. The barriers between levels were as clear as the horizontal lines in the diagram. The diagram also attempts to show the possibility of lateral movement and the small possibility of a peasant improving himself by going into the Church. Even without knowing the Pope's role, children should be able to see him as a

religious leader, closest to God. The emperor in the diagram is the Holy Roman Emperor. His political authority ran only in parts of central Europe, but he enjoyed special prestige throughout Western Christendom.

Children may be surprised to find a similar structure in their school. Encourage them to include the secretary, the custodian, volunteers, the nurse, etc. Some may notice the lack of Church figures in a modern diagram of government. This suggests the development of a contrast in value systems.

If the children have worked in small groups for the above activities, post the results of each group's work, peruse them as a whole class and evaluate each group's success.

In discussing the values and beliefs of medieval people, allow for strong, personal reactions by individual students and avoid hard and fast conclusions. Some may see superstition in these ideas, while others may identify strongly with them. Plan this activity to allow the children time to discuss it at home. Work individually or in pairs, with dictionary centre or library close at hand. Each child should be able to tell the meaning of the ideas under discussion without using the exact language of the dictionary.

### **THE PILGRIM'S WAY (pages 48-49)**

The concept of a pilgrimage is another model for visualizing medieval society. As with the People Pyramid it is only one of many possible points of view. It suggests that in an age when living conditions were generally harsh, when people lived in insecurity and feared for their safety, and when it was almost impossible to improve one's status, people concentrated their hopes on the next world rather than the present one.

A pilgrimage was one of the ways of pleasing God and gaining eternal life in Heaven. Pilgrimages were a common phenomenon in medieval life. To visit a holy place and return was considered a highlight of life. The journeys were often costly and arduous, involving long periods of travel, but pilgrims were respected and aided along the way.

Use the artist's sketch across the top of the spread to introduce the idea of a pilgrimage. How is it different from ordinary journeys? Would you expect it to be a long trip or a short one? Would it be easy? List possible reasons for the indecision of the man nearest the table.

Read the excerpts from a nobleman's pilgrimage to the class. Discuss the questions as a whole or in small groups, preparing individual responses. Share these with the whole class. List the people from the pyramid most likely to be able to make such a journey. List preparations necessary for such a long trip in medieval times.

A group may wish to research the present-day centres of pilgrimage shown in the photographs and present their findings as diaries of modern pilgrims. Another may wish to tape the medieval diary and provide suitable background noises or music. Some children might pantomime the journey or form tableaux of each part.

### **ONE WAY TO HEAVEN (pages 50-52)**

The theme of salvation, which was introduced by

means of the pilgrimage, is continued in the next sections of the book. Contributing to the construction of a church or cathedral was one of the good works that men performed to save their soul.

Cathedrals in medieval Western Europe were immense. Those unable to go on pilgrimages were able to donate time, money or effort to the building of these centres of worship and church organization. They took lifetimes to build. Most medieval people could visit one of them at some point, and even those tied to the land could hear about them from wandering friars or free men.

With the class, list the churches in the community and locate them on a street map. Estimate how many families attend each one. A local priest or minister may be willing to give the history of his church and tell how it was financed and built.

Recall the values and commitments involved in the medieval pilgrimage. Have the students read and study the picture on page 50. Answer the questions orally. The materials list should include stone, wood, glass and metal (lead, particularly). Students may suggest concrete or plastic and the teacher should have another student explain why they are unlikely. Close examination of the picture will show small, crowded, wooden houses nearby. The children might be able to explain why this discrepancy between dwelling and cathedral existed. If not, let this question sit until they have more experiences with values.

Other activities for this page might include:

- estimating how many homes could have been built on the cathedral land
- discussion of why other churches are built so close to the cathedral walls
- preparing drawings to scale of the pyramid of Cheops and Rouen Cathedral
- comparing building methods of ancient Egypt and medieval Europe
- surveying the community to find how many families attend each church

Working with partners, children should be able to reproduce simple cross-sections of the items listed in question 1, page 51. The first two may be drawn actual size, but the third will require a scale. If a model is needed for a cross-section of a house, ask the children to bring in a doll's house and work out a scale for a drawing of it. Children may also have access to the architect's elevation drawings for their own homes.

Most children will have had some experience with making floor plans of school or home. If a floor plan was used on pages 22-23 to compare the houses of Wat the Tyler and Sir John, compare those results with the plan of the cathedral. Scale may present some difficulty. Use graph paper or make some of your own to suit. The whole class might decide on a common scale. Children will notice that furniture is not included in the cathedral floor plan, and they may be surprised to know that rows of seats were not generally provided. Worshippers stood or knelt in groups or brought their own seats.

As an extension of working with scale, have children estimate the height of the tower pictured on page

52 and explain how they reached the figure. The next question returns to the matter of values — the decorations were to the glory of God. Various ideas may be put forth for the final question, and again a resource person from the community could add to the discussion.

### **SYMBOLS (page 53)**

Although their tall, narrow shape mirrored the heavenward longing of medieval people, cathedrals were more than just large places of worship. They served as libraries, art galleries, meeting places and even sources of entertainment. Their magnificent decorations — stained glass, sculpture, mosaic, wall paintings — following a strict code of symbolism, provided a wealth of knowledge which most people could interpret although they were unable to read words. Few moderns can appreciate the "code" of this art work, but some of the symbolism remains, for instance, the image of Christ as young, slim and bearded. Outside of religion, modern people recognize many symbols for which words are not necessary.

Working in small groups, the children could list common characteristics of these paintings. They might try to explain why St. Matthew has a halo (all holy persons were depicted this way), why he has a book and pen (as a writer of the Gospel), why an angel is shown with him (to differentiate him from the other writers of Gospel), and so on.

If children are unable to continue with question 2, ask them how travellers get by in foreign lands. By returning to page 43, children will be able to recall the use of heraldry in recognizing knights and lords and their parties.

A group may want to collect pictures of uniforms, signs, or map keys that use symbolism. They may want to make up a game for other children to play.

### **ANOTHER PATH TO HEAVEN (pages 54-55)**

Monasteries provided most of the services that governments and social service agencies provide today. Besides these duties, the monks perpetuated learning and knowledge in many fields, particularly agriculture. The point of monastic life was service to God and man. To survive, the monks needed to be self-sufficient. Work became as necessary as prayer. Different monasteries offered different services — the diagram on page 54 is a very large, idealized one.

Read to the class from *A Door in the Wall* or *Adam of the Road*. Both these stories present a fictionalized, but accurate, account of the importance of monks to medieval life.

Work as a whole class on these pages, if possible with the diagram projected onto a screen. Discuss how a monk's duties might be decided. Most children recognize what elements are needed to make up a community; if the class is not certain, take time to list the parts of a community that are essential to modern life.

Small groups could list the top five priorities for a monastery, along with reasons for each. From these lists the whole class might reconstruct the parts of a small monastic community.

Interested children might find the meanings of Matins, Prime and Vespers. The A.A. Milne poem

*Vespers* may be of interest — it tells of Christopher Robin saying his evening prayers. Another group may want to find more detailed information about the individual activities shown in the pictures. Some of these activities continue in modern monasteries.

### **ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI (page 56)**

St. Francis was a rebel. He advocated complete poverty, and disliked organization. Before his death, however, his followers were completely organized and living in monasteries. St. Francis is especially relevant today, as children will find in these excerpts from his ecology-minded *Canticle*.

Read, or have the children read, about St. Francis. Discuss why he is called "saint" and how he became one. Read the *Canticle* for choral speaking. Find pictures to illustrate each stanza. Project them or make 35 mm slides and project them, as the voice choir speaks the *Canticle*. Additional verses might be written about pets or domestic or zoo animals.

Monasteries were often very successful economically. Some children might be interested in discussing how that might lead to a breakdown of the original purpose of monasteries.

### **LOCATION OF CATHEDRALS (page 57)**

The names of the map are the modern designations and are for the convenience. Europe was dotted with cathedrals during the Middle Ages, one in almost every bishopric. Travel was difficult. Most travellers followed the coast line and crossed the mountains where rivers penetrated. As centres of church organization, the cathedrals attracted commerce and trade. By the late Middle Ages, towns were growing, usually around the cathedrals.

This section provides some recall of skills developed earlier. Have the children answer questions 1 to 4 in small groups. The final question will require some guidance. The Muslims had little success in penetrating France because of the Pyrenees Mountains and the difficulty of moving armies south to north through Spain, where the rivers run mainly east-west.

By referring to the pilgrimage on page 48, interested children may be able to map the journey from England by water to the southwest coast of France then by land skirting the mountains to Santiago.

### **THE SOLDIER'S WAY TO HEAVEN (pages 58-61)**

This section of the book is mainly concerned with the values behind the holy wars. Read the information silently. Look back through the book for other pages that might give background on the crusades. List pages and topics. As a whole class, make a final list and assign groups to read and report on each. This activity might be unnecessary or shortened considerably if the class is working through this book.

The scale or ratio in dividing loot is 1:2:4 foot-soldier:priest:knight. Groups might experiment with sharing counters, (multiples of seven would work out evenly, if you want it to) according to this ratio.

The suggested questions about the crusader knight on page 59 might be answered orally. Few conclusive answers are found in the picture and children may wish to pursue the matter through reference material.

The ideas suggested on pages 46 and 47 are recalled with the questions at the bottom of page 59. Children may interview members of the armed forces to help answer question 3. By searching through the book (pages 37, 38, 58 for example) children will be able to see that footsoldiers had very little protection. Since the last two questions require stating opinions and interpretations of values, individual answers would allow all opinions to be heard.

Before working with page 60 compare the map to the ones on pages 3 and 57. The question of distance may be as complex or as simple as you wish. Students might find the speed of walking and apply it to the distance. Others may prefer to estimate in general terms — many months, all year, etc.

Descriptions of crusades are available from many sources. If the children have difficulty with the second question, one of these materials might illustrate the extremes of temperature, the lack of shelter, the spectre of starvation, that stalked every crusade. Ship travel did not always solve the problem, as research will indicate. Passage was expensive and pirates were everywhere on the Mediterranean.

Trade flourished as a result of the crusades. Children might use this book or other materials to find commodities that Christians might trade.

A small group might research the Holy Places of Jerusalem and the current state of unrest there. Others might write about what life would be like without the contributions of the Muslim world:

- multiply XXIV times V and compare the process of to  $24 \times 5$
- find out what fruit might be substituted for oranges as a morning drink, a dessert ingredient, a snack
- list all the foods the children eat in one day that contain sugar; what would we have to substitute if there was no sugar?
- find the Arabic names of several stars visible in our sky
- search out words in our language derived from Arabic
- the Arabs preserved many texts of antiquity and transmitted them back to a Europe that was emerging from the Dark Ages; the children may also be interested to learn that it was the Muslim world

that invented bookbinding as we know it today, with sewn sections of pages, front and back covers, and a spine.

### **A BOOK OF HOURS (pages 62-63)**

Rich patrons often paid high prices during the late Middle Ages for beautifully illustrated calendars. These pictures are from one of them. The questions are an attempt to bring together major strands in the story of the Middle Ages; these pages presuppose a good deal of knowledge about the Middle Ages and could be handled by the whole class as a review lesson. Questions 1 to 8 are strictly observation of a new source. Questions 9 to 12 require discussion, preferably in small groups, while the last may be treated as a group or individual activity. Presentation methods might include plays, tapes, pantomimes, puppet plays, a slide presentation, etc., as a culmination of work on the topic.

### **A COMPARISON OF VALUES (page 64)**

The greatest leap of the mind required for understanding the Middle Ages is to accept a very different set of values. This last page attempts to show how modern exhibition buildings celebrate Man's control of his world, while medieval cathedrals celebrated the glory of God and the life hereafter. Medieval cathedrals glorified a faith; the geodesic dome, the Sydney opera house, the Montreal Olympic facilities and the CN Tower, glorify Man's achievements.

The questions attempt to summarize the values of medieval man and modern man by greatly over-simplifying. Slides, extra pictures, or excursions to large modern buildings would help point out the celebration of Man's technology. By comparing these with pictures of medieval cathedrals the student will find many obvious differences. These could be listed by groups of students, classified by type of difference, and then compared to other groups' findings.

Children who are interested may predict what type of architecture and what types of values might exist seven hundred years from now. Rather than treating it as a research problem, this might better be handled as creative drama, writing, painting, sculpture, model-building, etc.

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